

The Value of Teaching Emotional Resilience to Physiotherapy Undergraduate Students: Student's perspectives

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Abstract

Emotional vulnerability is seen in physiotherapy students (Walsh et al 2010) and in newly qualified HCPs (McCann et al 2013). Klappa et al (2015) note that compassion fatigue is identified internationally within the physiotherapy profession. The development of emotional resilience (ER) and coping strategies are advocated as a means of mitigating against stress levels, compassion fatigue and burnout amongst HCPs (McAllister and McKinnon 2008, Klappa et al 2015 and McCann et al 2013). The teaching of ER was introduced in to the BSc Physiotherapy curriculum at Coventry University in 2014.

Aim: To explore whether students perceived value in receiving ER training within the curriculum. **Method:** Using a qualitative approach, a purposeful sample of six final year physiotherapy undergraduate students were recruited. A focus group was conducted, data recorded, transcribed and thematic analysis was utilised. **Findings:** Three overarching themes were identified. Theme 1: 'clinical challenges' with sub themes; 'internal pressures' and 'external influences'. Theme 2: 'building resilience' with sub themes 'university teaching' and 'ongoing development'. Theme 3: 'learning to care' with sub themes 'caring for self' and 'caring for others'. **Conclusion:** Students described how the teaching they received on ER helped them with the challenges of clinical practice. Particular value was given to the recognition of their need to develop these skills and to a perceived permission to look after themselves and the development of self-compassion. **Limitations:** A small sample size and potential for bias through student self selection during the recruitment process.

Biography:



Sally Parkes and Jane Toms are both Assistant Professors in physiotherapy and Dr Joanne Opie is an Associate Professor and professional lead in physiotherapy at Coventry University. Sally specialised in physiotherapy in elderly care, Jane in respiratory care and Joanne in paediatric physiotherapy. Sally and Jane are both trained Mental Health First Aid trainers and Joanne has an interest in empathy and resilience amongst physiotherapists. We have worked together to build elements of the curriculum aimed at enhancing student resilience and experience.

Speaker Publications:

1. Long-acting, reversible and permanent methods of contraception: insight into women's choice of method: Qual Prim Care 2009;17(2):107-14.
2. Symptom classification in irritable bowel syndrome as a guide to treatment: Scand J Gastroenterol 2009;44(7):796-8 doi: 10.1080/00365520902964705.

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